

RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS assess, treat, and care for patients with breathing disorders. They assume primary responsibility for all respiratory care methods, including the supervision of respiratory therapy technicians. Respiratory Therapists carefully follow physicians' orders. They set up and operate respirators, masks, incubators, and positive breathing machines designed to give respiratory assistance to patients. They use other mechanical devices to stimulate the flow of mucus from the lungs, as well as aerosol inhalants and sprays that supply the lungs with medication. They do blood-gas analyses.

Therapists monitor equipment, observe patient reactions, assess conditions, assure comfort, and recommend changes in therapy to physicians. They record relevant information on patients' charts. They may also use a variety of testing techniques to assist doctors in medical research and to diagnose disorders.

Requirements

- ▲ High school diploma or equivalent.
- ▲ Graduation from a respiratory therapy program approved by the Respiratory Care Board of California (RCB).
- ▲ Licensure by the RCB as a Respiratory Care Practitioner.
- ▲ Completion of 15 hours of RCB approved continuing education every two years.
- ▲ Interest in helping people.
- ▲ Able to handle stress.
- ▲ Manual dexterity and mechanical aptitude.
- ▲ Fingerprint clearance is required.

Respiratory Therapists

Wages

- ▲ Respiratory Therapists
Median hourly wage: \$26.76
- ▲ Average annual wage: \$56,480

Source: Occupational Employment Survey of Employers 2006 by EDD/LMID.

Job Outlook

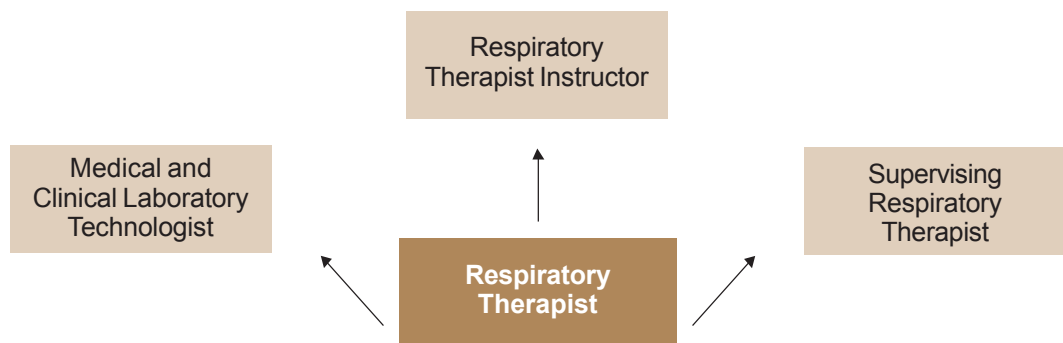
- ▲ Estimated number of Respiratory Therapists in 2004: 10,700
- ▲ Estimated number of Respiratory Therapists in 2014: 13,100
- ▲ Estimated annual job openings: 590

Source: Occupational Projections, EDD/LMID.

Sources of Information

- ▲ Respiratory Care Board of California
(916) 323-9983
www.rcb.ca.gov
- ▲ California Occupational Guide, No. 454
Respiratory Therapists

Possible Career Paths



The skills, knowledge, and abilities acquired for the primary occupation provide a solid foundation for further growth in health career occupations. Additional education or training is often required.